

The Sunday School.

LESSON FOR AUGUST 15.

Abstaining For The Sake Of Others.—1 Cor. 8:1-13.

Golden Text.—For none of us liveth to himself.—Rom. 14:17.

INSTRUCTION.

Introduction.—To study this lesson intelligently it will be necessary to get some idea of the condition of the church at Corinth at this time. "It was the largest, as it certainly was the most troublesome, that the apostle gathered; and both for the same reason. Corinth was a commercial city. The restless, active temperament of the people bore fruit in parties with the church, disorders in the lives of its members, and other evils." It was only five years since these people had come out of heathenism, and it is but natural to suppose that their early training and habits were still clinging to them. Their surroundings were very unfavorable.

1. *The Question.*—One of the things that very greatly perplexed young converts was as to what they should do in case of meat offered to idols. May they eat it or is it a violation of the principles of the Gospel which they accepted as their rule of faith and practice? Meat which was not laid on the altar and which belonged partly to the priests and partly to those who had offered the sacrifices, was often sold in the market. Christians might therefore eat of it in the home of some friend or buy it in the market and eat it, unconsciously. The question then was whether it was right for a disciple of Christ to eat meat that was so connected with idolatry. The conference at Jerusalem seven years before had decided that Christians should "abstain from meat offered to idols." Acts 15:29. "On the other hand, the more enlightened saw that the idol was nothing, and that it did not injure the meat offered to such idols. They felt that it was wise to ignore all such things, treat the idols as the nothings that they really were. It made life difficult, shut Christians out from social intercourse with their heathen neighbors, and was discourteous to them, so that the spread of the Gospel would be hindered by a formality which their intellects forbade them to defend."

2. *The Question Decided.*—How was this question to be decided? Will Paul lay down certain rules to govern the Corinthian brethren in this matter? This would be an endless and useless task. Instead of such rules Paul lays down some great fundamental principles which were to govern them in their daily life among

the people. The question must be settled by the principle of love. It does not depend on what one's rights may be in this matter; it may be his right to eat such meat, but if the eating caused his brother to offend, why not abstain? We have knowledge of the right and wrong of the thing, but another may not have such knowledge, for our weak brother's sake we should abstain from eating. It was this that made Paul write as he did in verse 13 of this lesson.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

1. *Knowledge and Charity.*—There is a remarkable contrast between knowledge and charity. Knowledge itself without love has a tendency to make one vain, puffed up and think of himself more highly than he ought to think, which is contrary to the teachings of both Christ and the apostles. Knowledge without love may become a dangerous thing. When one is proud of what he knows he may be justly classed with those of whom Paul says they think they know something when as yet they know nothing. The few things we are able to learn in this short life-time amounts to so little compared with what there is to learn, that it is merest folly to boast of what one may know. There are always many more things we do not know than things we do know; why then should one be proud of what he knows? Our knowledge should be accompanied by charity, true love, otherwise we are in danger of using it to our and others' harm. With all your getting of knowledge, get *charity*.

2. *Our Liberty in Christ.*—Christ himself teaches that if he makes us free we are free indeed. The truth makes us free and Jesus Christ is the truth. But we need to exercise care so as not to abuse our liberty. Liberty does not mean license to do wrong; it does not even give us privilege to do what is not wrong in itself, but the doing of which may be a stumbling block to others. We have no right to do what will prove an injury to others, tho in itself there may be no harm in it. We must have all due regard for the rights and privileges of others. Those who are continually pressing their own rights and insist on having them regardless of results, are people who have not been at the feet of Jesus and learned of him. Of course we must never violate any principle for policy's sake or for fear of hurting others' feelings, but this is not necessary in the exercise of the liberty which is in Christ Jesus.

3. *Temperance.*—The principle taught in this lesson may very appropriately be applied to the subject of temperance. For our own sakes and for the sake of others we should abstain from all strong

drink. More than one-half of all the evils in this country would be remedied if the liquor traffic were destroyed.

WHAT WE SHOULD DO.

- 1 Learn to know God by loving him.
- 2 Have regard for the rights of others.
- 3 Make your daily life a help to others.
- 4 Abstain from all appearance of evil.
- 5 Always help your weak brother.
- 6 Deny yourself for others' sake.

SUPPORT THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

EMMA BEATRICE GNAGEY.

A church living and working for Christ will not neglect its Sunday School. Indeed the Sunday School is a very important part of church work. It is there that the child is taught more of the sweet lessons from God's Book than anywhere else save at the mother's knee. What influence will better help to mould the character of the man than that shed upon the child in the Sunday School? Shall we ever forget the Sabbath days when we listened to the teacher as she told us the story of Adam and Eve, of Cain and Abel, showing us the sin and sorrow disobedience costs; of the old patriarch Jacob; of the boy Joseph; of Moses who followed where God led until the noble soul, longing for a better world was taken to the New Jerusalem; of the faithful Joshua and Caleb; of Abraham, the Friend of God; of Ruth and of David; and sweeter far than any of these the story of the blessed Christ, the Babe of Bethlehem. Shall we ever forget the lessons learned there? No; the work of the Sunday School will never be lost.

How often we hear the cry, "How may we make our School more interesting?" There is a work for each officer, teacher and pupil in the school; let each one do his part and the Sunday School will be a success. The superintendent should know that there may be too much singing, too much praying, too much talking, indeed too much of anything and that this will be detrimental to the school. He should be wise enough to know just how much singing or how much praying is necessary. And he should strive to have an orderly school. Bad behavior in the house of God is annoying to the teacher and is bad for the children. There is a great responsibility resting on the teacher. He must come prepared to teach, to make each one get some good from the lesson. The teacher has no right to come before his class without having carefully studied his lesson. The teacher can also accomplish much by being interested in his pupils and by showing them in his actions that he is. He can show this in many ways; such as visiting the sick, caring for the needy, and by interesting them in some